

Duxbury Clipper
P. 1
Nov, 19, 2014

Alden site dedicated as a National Historic Monument

It took six years for the John and Priscilla Alden Family Sites to get the designation as a National Historic Landmark. Members of the Alden Kindred, Kindred Board of Directors, Duxbury Selectmen, school officials and politicians including the late Senator Ted Kennedy and Congressman Delahunt appealed to the Department of the Interior to obtain this impressive status, and is the only National Historic Landmark in Duxbury. The two Alden home sites (the first built in 1627 on the grounds of what is today part of Alden Elementary School where foundation stones remain and the second being the main Alden House on Alden St) became National Historic Landmarks in 2008 but the stone and plaque were dedicated on Saturday, Nov. 15.

Alden "Rink" Ringquist, Alden Kindred Board Member and former director of the Alden House, is proud of the new status and credited a number of people for donating thousands of hours of time to fulfill the application requirements. Ringquist mentioned some by name, including Jim Baker,

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Duxbury Selectman Co-Chair David Madigan, Alden Advisory Board member and former Alden House Director Alden "Rink" Ringquist, Pauline Kezer, President of the Alden Kindred and Alden House Director Matthew Vigneau with the newly installed National Historic Landmark plaque.

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board member and former curator of the Alden House who wrote the history of the homestead submitted with the application. Board member and Professor of History at the U.S. Naval Academy Tom McCarthy's effort was key as he made numerous presentations to the Department of the Interior. Valuable local support came from former Selectwoman Betsy Sullivan, former Duxbury School Superintendents Eileen Williams and Sue Skeiber and resident Lee Kennedy. Ringquist himself was part of the team as well.

According to the Department of the Interior, "National Historic Landmarks are nationally significant historic places designated by the Secretary of the Interior because they possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States. Today, just over 2,500 historic places bear this national distinction." There are 187 National Historic Landmarks in Massachusetts, second behind New York, according to Ringquist. The plaque in front of the Alden House reads, "Longfellow's 1858 poem 'The Courtship of Miles Standish' about the romance of Mayflower passengers John Alden and Priscilla Mullins became one of America's most popular national origin stories. This Circa 1700 House became the focus of descendants' pride in telling the Alden story to successive generations." The first Alden Homestead was built in 1627 and the current building's early section was built sometime between 1657-1700, according to current Alden House Director Matt Vigneau. The Alden House is believed to be the only remaining home belonging to passengers on the Mayflower. There are many notable Alden descendants including John Adams, John Quincy Adams, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Marilyn Monroe, according to Ringquist.



The Alden House.

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The John and Priscilla Alden Family Sites plaque is next to the Alden House. The granite is from Swenson Granite Works, a company that has provided granite for numerous prestigious monuments including the Brooklyn Bridge and the Pentagon.



In May, Alden House Director Matthew Vigneau showed Alden Elementary students the original Alden Homestead on the Alden Elementary School grounds. This site along with the Alden House shares the National Historic Landmark status and is the only one in Duxbury.

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